



NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL

CHAPTER: 82.4

TITLE: COMPLAINT SIGNALS—CHANGING OF ITEM SIGNALS AND DISPOSITIONS

EFFECTIVE: 05/07/2017

REVISED: 11/15/19

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Chapter is to establish standards for changing the signal or disposition of an item number when it is closed, i.e. marked up, by the primary unit.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Calls for service are communicated through the Orleans Parish Communications District (OPCD) Public Safety Access Point. The calls can come in via the “911” emergency number or the 504-821-2222 non-emergency number. The nature of the complaint or request for service is classified based on the information and answers to questions provided by the caller. The Call-for-Service (CFS) is relayed to the appropriate geographic police District or unit for handling. When required, the classification of the CFS made by OPCD-PSAP may be changed by the officer(s) actually handling the CFS based on updated information.
2. The accurate, final disposition of calls for service is critical to ensure that complainants and victims receive the appropriate police response and to maintain accurate data for assessment and analysis of the Department’s response. NOPD participates in the training of call-takers and dispatchers at the OPCD, when requested, to provide information that will assist in the proper classification of signals. Changing item signals and dispositions by members shall only be permitted under limited circumstances as outlined in this Chapter.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions relevant to this Chapter include:

Disposition—A valid identifier added to an item when it is closed, such as, but not limited to:

- (a) Necessary action taken (NAT)
- (b) Report to follow (RTF)
- (c) Unfounded (UNF)
- (d) Gone on arrival (GOA)

District/division commander—Under normal circumstances, the commissioned Department employee responsible for and in command of the unit who generally holds the position of Police

Captain.

Primary unit—The police unit as indicated in the PSAP Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system as the unit responsible for handling the call for service; this unit is also responsible for relaying the appropriate disposition.

Primary dispatch talk group—The designated location or channel on the police radio that has been designated for either a particular geographic police district or a specific police unit. Most commonly referred to as a “channel.”

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)—Official name for the “911 Call Center,” the Orleans Parish Communications District, which includes both emergency and non-emergency call requests for Police, Fire, and EMS.

Signal—The alphanumeric identifier given a particular call for service that was in place at the time the item was given a final disposition.

INSTRUCTIONS

3. All calls for service generated through the Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) of the PSAP shall have a unique alphanumeric identifier referred to as the item number.
4. The primary unit shall have the responsibility for providing an appropriate disposition for each item thus causing the item to be closed in CAD.
5. Dispatching calls for service, giving dispositions, or changing unit status shall not be conducted over the telephone. These actions must be broadcast over the primary dispatch talk group for the police district or over the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT).
6. Should special circumstances relating to the classification or handling of a CFS require that a dispatcher be contacted by the officer over the telephone, such calls should be routed through the Communication Services – NOPD Liaison.
7. If an officer assigned to handle a call for service determines that the signal needs to be changed in order to correctly identify the call for service, the officer may change the signal, without the approval of a supervisor, **unless**:
 - (a) The incident originated as a sexual assault related signal (see **Chapter 42.2 – Sexual Assault**); or
 - (b) The incident originated as a child abuse related signal (see **Chapter 42.19 – Child Abuse**); or
 - (c) The signal was a call of Domestic Violence (see **Chapter 42.4 - Domestic Violence**); or
 - (d) The signal should be changed from a UCR report crime to a Non-UCR report crime.
8. An officer assigned to handle a call for service may change a signal initially identified by a dispatcher as a domestic violence signal (see (c) above) only upon the approval of a supervisor. In order to request such a change, the assigned officer will contact a supervisor by radio and provide the supervisor with an explanation for the requested change. The supervisor will communicate the approval, if granted, on the primary dispatch channel to Communications Services. If approved by the supervisor, the written explanation of the reason for the requested signal change will be included in any subsequent associated police report (EPR).

9. An officer assigned to handle a call for service may change a signal initially identified by a dispatcher as a UCR crime to a signal for a non-UCR crime or offense only upon the approval of a supervisor. In order to request such a change, the assigned officer shall contact a supervisor by radio and provide the supervisor with an explanation for the requested change. The supervisor will communicate the approval, if granted, on the primary dispatch channel to Communications Services. If approved by the supervisor, the written explanation of the reason for the requested signal change will be included in any subsequent EPR.
10. If it becomes necessary to change either the signal or disposition of an item after the item has been closed in CAD, the following shall occur:
 - (a) Platoon supervisors are authorized to change or correct the item number, signal, disposition, and location, within the limitations outlined in this Chapter, of any incidents or events within 24 hours of the item being closed in CAD.
 - (b) In the event that a platoon supervisor seeks to change a signal more than 24 hours after the item being closed:
 1. A **Change of Signal or Disposition Form** (Form 226) shall be completed by the platoon commander or, in his/her absence, the platoon supervisor on duty at the time the item was handled.
 2. Form 226 shall be completed in its entirety, including a complete written explanation of the reason for the requested change. If the item number (incident) has an associated police report (EPR), then a supplemental report (SUPP) shall be written containing a complete written explanation of the reason for the requested change.
 - (c) The completed Form 226 shall be forwarded to the district/division commander for review. Individuals other than the district/division commander or, in the event of a prolonged absence of the district/division commander, the acting district/division commander, may not be authorized to complete Form 226.
 - (d) Upon approval by the district/division commander, or the acting district/division commander in the event of a prolonged absence of the district/division commander, the original Form 226 shall be forwarded to the **Record and Identifications/Support Service Section** for update. One copy of the Form 226 shall be forwarded to the **Communications Services Liaison** (OPCD) and one copy shall be forwarded to the **Information Systems Section**. Distribution of the original Form 226 and all required copies shall be made by the district/division requesting the signal change or correction.
 - (e) A copy of the submitted Form 226 shall be maintained at the district/division level.

AUDIT AND REVIEW

11. The Audit and Review Unit of the Compliance Bureau shall review signal and/or disposition changes for appropriateness and compliance with Departmental guidelines, and report on such a review at least annually.